

CLAIMS

1. A method comprising:
establishing communication with a server including an external directory;
sending a request identifying a user-selected potential business partner in the external directory;
receiving a response from the external directory, the response including information relating to the selected potential business partner;
parsing the information in the response; and
creating a new business partner entry in an internal directory with the information parsed from the response.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the response comprises information in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein said creating comprises mapping the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the response comprises an XML page.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiating a business process which requires a business partner.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
completing the business process with the new business partner entry.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising
generating a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether the user has authority to approve the new business partner entry.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
flagging the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
generating a purchasing document with said new
business partner entry; and
flagging the purchasing document as on hold.

12. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
determining an authorized approver for the new
business partner entry.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
generating an approval workflow item for the
authorized approver.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
deleting the new business partner entry from the
internal directory in response to the authorized approver
not approving the new business partner entry.

15. An article comprising a machine-readable medium
storing instructions operable to cause one or more machines
to perform operations comprising:
establishing communication with a server including an
external directory;

sending a request identifying a user-selected
potential business partner in the external directory;

receiving a response from the external directory, the
response including information relating to the selected
potential business partner;

parsing the information in the response; and

creating a new business partner entry in an internal
directory with the information parsed from the response.

16. The article of claim 15, wherein the response
comprises information in a format compliant with a partner
interface protocol.

17. The article of claim 16, wherein said creating
comprises mapping the parsed information into fields
according to the partner interface protocol.

18. The article of claim 16, wherein the response
comprises an HTML page.

19. The article of claim 16, wherein the response
comprises an XML page.

20. The article of claim 15, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiating a business process which requires a business partner.

21. The article of claim 20, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

completing the business process with the new business partner entry.

22. The article of claim 21, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising generating a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

23. The article of claim 15, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

determining whether the user has authority to approve the new business partner entry.

24. The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

flagging the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

25. The article of claim 24, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and

flagging the purchasing document as on hold.

26. The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

determining an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.

27. The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

28. The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

deleting the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.

29. A system comprising:

an internal directory including information relating to a plurality of business partners;

a network device; and

an electronic procurement system operative to

establish communication with a server including an external directory,

send a request identifying a user-selected potential business partner in the external directory,

receive a response from the external directory, the response including information relating to the selected potential business partner,

parse the information in the response, and

create a new business partner entry in the internal directory with the information parsed from the response.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein the response comprises information in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to map the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.

32. The system of claim 30, wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

33. The system of claim 30, wherein the response comprises an XML page.

34. The system of claim 29, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiate a business process which requires a business partner.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

complete the business process with the new business partner entry.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

37. The system of claim 29, further comprising:

determine whether the user has authority to approve the new business partner entry.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

flag the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and

flag the purchasing document as on hold.

40. The system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

determine an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.

41. The system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

42. The system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

delete the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.